

Supe gets only the best

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You could say Gov. Schwarzenegger and Supervisor Clifford Young have a few things in common besides their political party.

Both Republicans took office on the heels of Democrats who were chased out.

Neither had ever held elected office before.



And both face steep learning curves as the governmental entities they help lead deal with major fiscal crises.

One more thing in common: Both are appointing the best and brightest from among their acquaintances and people recommended by trusted advisers, so they can surround themselves with people knowledgeable in areas where they lack experience.

That's what Schwarzenegger did when he appointed former Assemblyman and then-San Bernardino County Supervisor Fred Aguiar his secretary of State and Consumer Services, among other appointees.

And that's what Young did when he named Shauna Clark - formerly San Bernardino's elected city clerk and appointed city administrator - his chief of staff, along with other new staff.

Young also tapped one of his former students to be his communications director, a Cal State colleague to be his planning commissioner and a retired fellow Cal State administrator to be his field representative.

The planning commission appointee is Audrey L. Mathews, an assistant professor of public administration who was budget director for the cities of Compton and Beverly Hills in the 1970s and early '80s before deciding to teach. The Board of Supervisors will consider her appointment today.

She replaces Cheryl Brown, a Jerry Eaves appointee who served on the county planning commission for 11 years.

Young knows he bungled Brown's dismissal.

When he mentioned replacing her because of significant philosophical differences, county officials surprised him by acting quickly. He was used to a slower pace at Cal State, where it can take months to make changes, he said.

Brown was offended when she learned about her dismissal not from Young, but from the board meeting agenda.

"I was being naïve to the job in the first couple of days, otherwise I would've talked to Cheryl," Young said. "That is a courtesy. I blew it."

He got his first lesson in real-world public administration. A skilled staff should keep him from further blunders.

Clark honed her political savvy in the most politically charged San Bernardino County city. Starting at age 17, she worked her way up the ladder in the city clerk's office to the top post. Mayor Bob Holcomb made her city administrator, a position she left in December 1996.

Since then, she's been a public policy and project management consultant, working on Los Angeles city's charter revision, writing white papers for the Tomas Rivera Institute and doing policy analysis for the state Senate.

From 1997 to 2000, she taught public administration part time at Cal State, where she met Young. Later, she worked with him doing corporate and foundation relations (read fund-raising for the university).

Young's field rep is Amina Carter, who worked for Rep. George Brown until his death in 1999 and then worked at Cal State for several years until she retired. She served four terms on the Rialto school board.

Young's part-time communications director is Lynndee Kemmet, a doctoral candidate in political science who formerly was a newspaper reporter.